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SUBJECT: AU Summit - European Union's Manservisi Reaffirms Partnership with U.S.

This message is from USAU Ambassador Michael A. Battle.

¶1. (U) February 1, 2010, 10:30 a.m.; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

¶2. (U) Participants:

United States  
Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson  
NSC Senior Director Michelle Gavin  
USAID Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator Earl Gast  
USAU Ambassador Michael Battle  
Special Assistant Akunna Cook  
AU Desk Officer Ryan Bowles  
USAID AU Desk Officer Sarah Swift

European Union  
Director General for Development (DG-DEV) Stefano Manservisi  
Ambassador of the EU to the African Union, Koen Vervaeke

¶3. (SBU) Summary: A/S Carson and the European Union's DG-DEV Stefano Manservisi met at the African Union (AU) Summit, to share their satisfaction with the outcomes of the summit, especially the election of President of Malawi Bingu wa Mutharika as Chairperson of the AU and to confer on key African foreign policy issues. These included Ethiopian elections and civil society; donor coordination on Somalia; regional approaches to security and development issues; and the salary structure for AU peacekeepers. They articulated complementary strategies with respect to Ethiopian elections, including efforts to work within the Charities and Societies (CSO) law, and discussed perspectives on a Spanish-proposed political conference on Somalia. They discussed the Regional Economic Communities and the AU, including support of the USG in different sectors. Finally, Carson noted his concern with the salary structure for AU peacekeeping, as opposed to that of UN peacekeepers, and its impact on availability of qualified peacekeepers on the continent. Manservisi indicated that given evidence of such an impact, he would support a change in the AU salary structure. End Summary.

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Ethiopia: Elections and Civil Society  
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¶4. (SBU) Carson and Manservisi compared notes on their respective meetings with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, noting that he is clearly committed to maintaining a hard line leading up to the

election. Both agreed that while Meles is tough, it was important to keep pushing back, and insisting to the GOE that democracy in Ethiopia must take a positive trajectory. They also noted the importance of the opposition avoiding incendiary actions. The EU is proceeding with planning for an independent observation mission, headed by former EU Commissioner, and current member of the European parliament, Louis Michel. A preparatory mission is planned for February 15-22.

¶ 15. (SBU) With regard to implementation of the new CSO law in Ethiopia, the EU has been exploring means of adapting to the requirement that no civil society organization operating in Ethiopia can get more than ten percent of its funding from abroad. Manservisi agreed that the EU would follow up with the USG on their experiences, as efforts to continue to support Ethiopian civil society continue.

¶ 16. (U) Despite all the challenges associated with working with the GOE, Manservisi did note that he was pleased with the role that Meles has played in the international climate change negotiations, helping Africa to speak with a single voice. He indicated his expectation that the next AU Summit would include a strong deliverable on climate change.

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Political Conference on Somalia  
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¶ 17. (U) Carson raised the subject of a Spanish-proposed political conference on Somalia. He indicated that while he was not entirely opposed to the idea, he was concerned about the added value--how it would differ from International Contact Group (ICG) meetings and

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other donor coordination avenues. He and Manservisi agreed that there had been challenges in getting donors to fulfill their pledges from previous events. They concluded that the objective of the meeting would be to advance donor implementation of pledged support, and that if such a meeting is planned, that an advance meeting of a smaller group should be held to determine goals and strategies to achieve that objective.

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Africa Regional Architecture  
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¶ 18. (U) Manservisi indicated his interest in strengthening Africa's regional architecture including the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the AU. This encompasses both peace and security functions as well as economic and social developments. He talked about the need to engage as donors with the AU to build capacity and strengthen the linkages between the RECs and the AU. Carson indicated that the U.S. relationship with the AU is managed by Ambassador Michael Battle, who is currently a co-chair of the AU Partners Group. He indicated that our engagement to date has been largely focused on the peace and security functions of the AU, but that USAID is working on expanding its engagement in social and economic sectors, as well as continuing work with the AU on democracy and governance issues.

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Salary Structure for AU Peacekeepers  
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¶ 19. (SBU) Finally, Carson consulted Manservisi on the question of salary for AU peacekeepers, noting the substantial support provided by the EU for this purpose, especially in connection with AMISOM. Currently, AU peacekeepers earn \$750 a month, as compared to \$1000 a month paid to peacekeepers working on UN missions. Carson asked Manservisi's support for increasing the AU salaries to the UN rate, noting that this might prove a useful incentive for African countries to contribute more troops to AU missions. In particular he suggested that this could improve the availability of troops to AMISOM and help to move the mission forward. Manservisi indicated that if there were evidence that such an increase would indeed impact the availability of peacekeepers, he would support such a

change.

¶10. (U) A/S Carson has not cleared this cable.

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